

P3. Disability Assessment and Musculoskeletal Diseases

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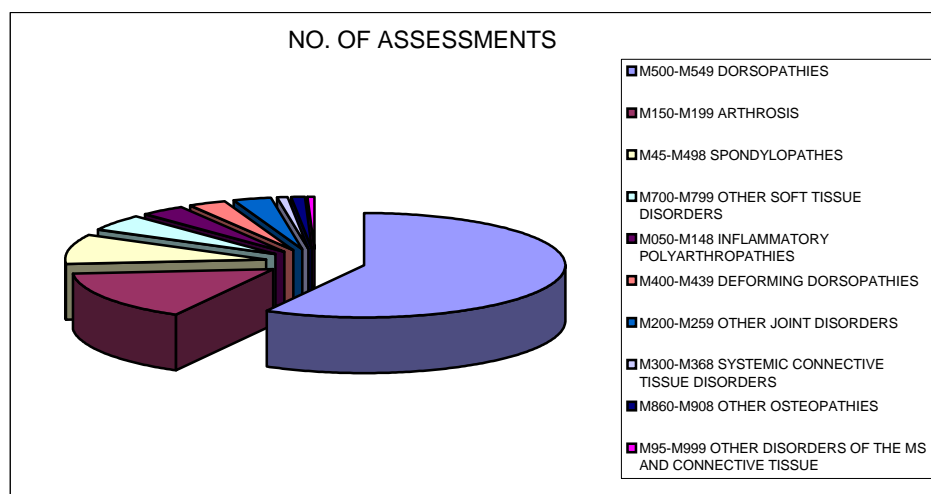
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Musculoskeletal diseases are one of the most common reasons for submitting a disability assessment proposal and for claiming disability insurance entitlements. The Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of the Republic of Slovenia is one of the pillars of social insurance that is in charge of implementing disability insurance rights. The disability boards play quite an important role in this. They examine the proposals for disability assessments and give their evaluation in an expert opinion on the basis of which the Institute issues a decision on the existence or non-existence of one of the disability categories. Disability categories simultaneously imply the scope of disability insurance rights that an insured person can claim.

Among the reasons for disability insurance claims, is also disability resulting from the musculoskeletal system impairment. Between 2003 and the end of 2006, under the new legislation, 20,565 or 12.22% of all disability assessments were issued due to musculoskeletal system diseases. In 2006, the disability boards examined 41,285 proposals for disability assessment of which 4,831 (11.70%) were related to musculoskeletal diseases. On the basis of medical documentation and especially the last description of the insured person's functional status, the description of the work they did or still do and their education and skills, the board of examiners can place the insured person into the 1st, 2nd or 3rd disability category. In 2006, 408 insured persons were placed into the 1st category, 283 into the 2nd and 3,438 into the 3rd category due to musculoskeletal disease. The most common condition in disability assessments on the grounds of musculoskeletal disease was back pain.

The number of disease classes according to ICD-10 assessed by disability boards in 2006



The most common cause of musculoskeletal system impairment is the disease or post-injury condition of the spine, occurring with manual workers, above all, because of the poor lifting

techniques and microtrauma and, in other professions, also because of the genetic predisposition, inappropriate sitting work posture, improper lifestyle, etc. With a greater understanding of employers for an ergonomic design of work posts and by educating employees on the correct use of tools that would relieve them at work, the use of protection devices, correct posture and a healthy lifestyle as an important preventive measure, there would probably be less patients in orthopaedic waiting rooms or before disability committees awaiting their disability assessments.

- **References:**

- [1] Pension and Disability Insurance Act ZPIZ-1-UPB2/(Official Gazette of the RS, no. 106/99 including amendments)
- [2] Rules on the Organization and Work of Disability Committees and Other Expert Bodies of the Institute (Official Gazette of the, no. 118/05 including amendments)
- [3] Medical Assessment Practise at the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of the Republic of Slovenia – 12 January 2004
- [4] Disability Assessment Criteria - March 2007
- [5] Annual Report of the Pension and Disability Insurance Institute of the Republic of Slovenia - February 2007.